

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1 1. (Currently Amended) A station for a network apparatus, said network apparatus
2 comprising said station and a plurality of other stations, all interconnected in a network by a
3 communication link, said station comprising:
4 a network connection;
5 a self assessment module operable to determine a current status of said station, wherein
6 said current status is a measure of ~~said stations~~ available resources of said station;
7 a trust list that includes a station identifier for ~~said or each other station~~ of said plurality
8 of other stations, which is designated as trusted to perform tasks for said station;
9 a broadcast unit operable to transmit service requests to said network connection and onto
10 said network, said service requests being directed to said ~~or each other station~~ identified in said
11 trust list and constituting a request to said ~~or each other station~~ to perform a task for said station;
12 and
13 an answer unit operable to receive service requests from said network through said
14 network connection and, in response thereto, to transmit to said network through said network
15 connection an acceptance or refusal message in respect of said service request, said acceptance
16 or refusal being decided ~~having regard to~~ based on said current status of said station, as
17 determined by said self assessment module.

1 2. (Previously Presented) The station according to claim 1, wherein said self assessment
2 module is operable to determine a static status for said station based on hardware resources of

3 said station and a dynamic status for said station based on current usage of said hardware
4 resources.

1 3. (Currently Amended) The station according to claim 1, further comprising a system
2 security module operable to handle encryption between said station and ~~said or~~ each other trusted
3 station.

1 4. (Previously Presented) The station according to claim 1, further comprising a task
2 execution, monitoring and reporting module operable to broadcast to said network progress
3 updates on tasks accepted by and being performed in said station on behalf of an other station.

1 5. (Previously Presented) The station according to claim 1, further comprising a task
2 scheduler module arranged to monitor all tasks being performed in said station, including tasks
3 initiated by said station for said station and tasks being performed in response to receipt of a
4 service request from one of said other stations.

1 6. (Previously Presented) The station according to claim 1, further comprising a service
2 requirement analysis module and a software resource repository in which a plurality of software
3 modules are stored, said service requirement analysis module being operable to maintain said
4 software resource repository by importing and exporting software modules to and from other
5 stations having regard to demand in said station for such software modules.

1 7. (Currently Amended) The station according to claim 6, wherein said station is further
2 operable to broadcast messages to said network offering software modules held in said software
3 resource repository to ~~said or~~ each other trusted station.

1 8. (Previously Presented) The station according to claim 1, further comprising a
2 service/performance history learning analysis module operable to apply artificial intelligence to
3 find task bottlenecks in said station and said other station, and to bring these to the attention of a
4 network administrators if it can not solve them itself.

1 9. (Previously Presented) The station according to claim 1, further comprising a task
2 failure management module, operable to transmit to said network a failure message in response
3 to failure of said station successfully to complete a task being performed for one of said other
4 stations.

1 10. (Previously Presented) The station according to claim 9, wherein said task failure
2 management module is further operable to monitor for failure messages transmitted by one of its
3 trusted stations and, in response thereto, to handle said failure message as said service request
4 message for said failed task.

1 11. (Original) A network comprising a plurality of stations according to claim 1
2 interconnected by a communication link.

1 12. (Original) A network according to claim 11, wherein there is no central server for
2 said network.

1 13. (Original) A network according to claim 11, wherein said network operates to a
2 protocol that permits stations to be removed from and added to said network dynamically.

1 14. (Original) A method of distributing tasks in a network comprising a plurality of
2 stations, all interconnected by respective network connections to a communication link, said
3 method comprising:

4 transmitting a service request by a first station to its network connection and onto said
5 network, said service request being directed to a trusted sub-group of said stations and specifying
6 a task to be performed; and

7 receiving said service request by a second station, that is one of said trusted sub-group of
8 stations, through its network connection and, in response thereto, transmitting to said network
9 through its network connection an acceptance or refusal message in respect of said service
10 request, said acceptance or refusal being decided having regard to said current status of said
11 second station, as determined by a self assessment of said second station; and

12 carrying out said task specified in said service request by said second station and
13 returning a service result to said first station.

1 15. (Original) A method according to claim 14, wherein said carrying out of said service
2 request by said second station involves further distribution of said service by transmitting further
3 service requests to a sub-group of said stations trusted by said second station.

1 16. (Original) Computer software comprising program code means for carrying out a
2 method according to claim 14.

1 17. (Original) A carrier medium carrying computer software according to claim 16.

1 18. (Original) A medium according to claim 17, the medium being a storage medium.

1 19. (Original) A medium according to claim 17, the medium being a transmission
2 medium.